# Provincial Initiatives Directed Towards Aboriginal People in Alberta

September 1996

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

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## Introduction

The Province of Alberta is committed to fostering cooperative relationships among Aboriginal people, government, and industry in Alberta. Through formal consultation, the Province has made great strides in opening dialogue and has initiated a "made-in-Alberta" approach towards self-government, within the existing constitutional framework, for Aboriginal communities. The Government of Alberta recognizes that only through direct working relationships and a sincere partnership approach, can Aboriginal communities reach their goals and aspirations. This approach, along with provincial initiatives directed towards Aboriginal communities, will ultimately mean social and economic benefits for all Albertans. At the same time, the Alberta government recognizes the primary responsibility for Aboriginal people by the federal government and respects the special treaty and constitutional relationship between the federal government and Indian people in Alberta.

The Province addresses Aboriginal issues through:

- **Key Initiatives, Specific Programs and Services by Departments;**
- **The Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs;**
- **Legislation; and**
- **Formal Consultation Processes.**

Alberta continues to break new ground in its relationship with Aboriginal people. Aboriginal groups and other governments have recognized Alberta as an active and progressive jurisdiction in its relationship with Aboriginal people. The following initiatives illustrate the Province's continuing commitment to Aboriginal people and their aspirations for self-management and self-determination.

## Aboriginal Affairs' Revised Mandate

In November 1993, **Aboriginal Affairs** was given a stronger mandate to raise the profile of Aboriginal issues within the Government of Alberta and to provide a more coordinated approach to Aboriginal issues. In order to facilitate this, provincial departments and agencies consult with the Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs in regards to legislation which may impact Aboriginal people or any Aboriginal and treaty rights. Aboriginal Affairs works closely with other government departments to help improve service and program delivery to Aboriginal people and to also assist Aboriginal groups in gaining access to government services and understanding government policy.

## Metis Settlements Legislation

On November 1, 1990, the Government of Alberta proclaimed legislation that provides for a unique form of government on the eight Metis Settlements. It is unique in that it establishes the only Metis land base and the only form of legislated Metis government in Canada. The legislation provides for the constitutional protection of 1.25 million acres of Settlement lands (in the *Constitution of Alberta Amendment Act, 1990*), the development of local government structures and systems, provincial financial commitments and the co-management of subsurface resources. The legislation was developed cooperatively by the Province of Alberta and the Alberta Federation of Metis Settlements in an effort to accommodate Metis aspirations of securing their land base, gaining local autonomy and achieving self-sufficiency.

This year, Settlement and government representatives are engaged in a series of discussions to address changes to commitments and administrative structures which are scheduled to begin in April 1997.

## Treaty Land Entitlement Claims

Under the terms of the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement of 1930 (now the Constitution Act, 1930), the Province of Alberta is obligated to transfer back to the federal government, unoccupied Crown lands required by the federal government to fulfill its responsibilities to First Nations under the treaties. Treaty land entitlement claims are filed with the federal government; however, both the Province and the federal government participate in the negotiation of settlements.

The Government of Alberta is committed to meeting this constitutional obligation through the negotiation of land claim settlements which are fair and equitable to all parties involved and in the best interest of all Albertans. In recent years, a number of significant treaty land claim settlements have been reached in Alberta:

· **1986: Mikisew Cree First Nation** (Fort Chipewyan) received 12,280 acres of land and $26,600,000. The Government of Alberta contributed the land and $17,600,000; the Government of Canada contributed $9,000,000.

· **1990: Sturgeon Lake Band** received 16,207 acres of land and $5,575,000. The Government of Alberta contributed the land and $1,425,000; the Government of Canada contributed $4,150,000.

· **1990: Whitefish Lake First Nation** received 5,830 acres of land and $19,166,000. The Government of Alberta contributed the land and $10,833,000; the Government of Canada contributed $8,333,000.

· **1991: Woodland Cree Band** received 35,200 acres of land and $19,512,000. The Government of Alberta contributed the land and $5,000,000; the Government of Canada contributed $14,512,000. In addition, over a period of five years, the Government of Canada is providing $35,200,000 for capital construction on the new reserves and the Government of Alberta is funding a special training and employment program at a cost of $3,000,000.

· **1992: Kapawe'no First Nation** (Grouard) received 2,600 acres of land and $3,005,688. The Government of Alberta contributed the land and $982,000; the Government of Canada contributed $2,023,688.

· **1993: Chipewyan Prairie First Nation (Janvier)** received 3,400 acres of land and $5,000,000. The Government of Alberta contributed the land and $1,800,000; the Government of Canada contributed $3,200,000.

· **1993: Tallcree Band** received 13,000 acres of land and $7,000,000. The Government of Alberta contributed the land and $1,500,000; the Government of Canada contributed $5,500,000.

· **1995: Alexis First Nation** received 20,824 acres of land and $12,000,000. The Government of Alberta contributed the land and $2,000,000; the Government of Canada contributed $10,000,000.

· Negotiations are presently underway regarding treaty land entitlement claims for a number of other First Nations.

## Consultation Processes with Metis and First Nations

The Province has formal agreements in place that provide for open and meaningful dialogue between Aboriginal groups and government. These agreements allow Aboriginal groups to be involved in those aspects of government that directly affect them.

**Alberta/Metis Nation of Alberta Association (MNAA) Framework Agreement**

The Framework Agreement, originally signed in 1987, and renewed on August 16, 1993 for a five-year term, establishes a structure and process for joint planning and action between the Province and the MNAA. The Agreement allows for off-Settlement Metis to participate in joint planning in the development and access to provincial government programs and services.

The MNAA works and negotiates with provincial departments responsible for Education; Advanced Education and Career Development; Family and Social Services; Environmental Protection; Economic Development and Tourism; Municipal Government; and Housing. The departments involved in the Framework Agreement are currently developing new memoranda of understanding and work plans in accordance with the Agreement.

**Canada/Alberta/Metis Nation of Alberta Association Tripartite Agreement**

This Agreement, originally signed in 1992, is intended to complement the existing Alberta/MNAA Framework Agreement. It allows for increased coordination between the provincial and federal governments and increased Metis input in the decision-making and administration of federal and provincial programs and services.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Grand Council of Treaty 8 First Nations and the Government of Alberta**

On February 10, 1993, Premier Klein and Treaty 8 Grand Chief Halcrow signed a Memorandum of Understanding. It was the first such MOU between the Alberta government and a First Nations group. The MOU established a process for dialogue between the Grand Council and the Government of Alberta. The parties agreed to consult with each other in the development of policies, programs and services affecting the Treaty 8 First Nations in Alberta. To date, this MOU has facilitated discussions between Treaty 8 First Nations and the provincial departments of Environmental Protection, Education and Family and Social Services.

**Fort Chipewyan/BC Hydro/Canada/Alberta Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

In April 1993, the Aboriginal community of Fort Chipewyan, the governments of Alberta and Canada, and the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding to conduct studies in the Peace-Athabasca Delta. These studies are designed to determine the impacts of the Bennett Dam in British Columbia on the environment and the community of Fort Chipewyan and area.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Siksika Nation and the Government of Alberta**

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on October 5, 1993, by Premier Klein and Chief Crowfoot, establishing a process to guide provincial involvement in the Siksika Nation community-based self-government negotiations. Federal policy requires provincial involvement in discussions regarding areas which normally fall within provincial jurisdiction.

**Understanding on First Nations/Alberta Relations**

This agreement was initiated at a Chiefs' Summit in November 1994. At this Summit, Premier Klein committed to establish a more formal "government-to-government" relationship between Chiefs of the First Nations of Alberta (Council of Chiefs) and the Government of Alberta. On November 10, 1995, at Chiefs' Summit III, the "Understanding on First Nations/Alberta Relations" agreement was signed. As of April 1996, 22 of the 45 First Nations had signed the Understanding. The Understanding commits the parties to discuss issues of mutual interest or concern. Working procedures are to be established between the appropriate Minister(s) responsible for areas of concern or interest and the Council of Chiefs. To date, preliminary discussions have occurred among the First Nations Resource Council (representing the Alberta Chiefs) and Alberta Health.

## Key Initiatives, Programs and Services

### Advanced Education and Career Development

**Students of Aboriginal Ancestry in Alberta Public Post-Secondary Institutions**

A report entitled "Students of Aboriginal Ancestry in Alberta Public Post-Secondary Institutions" was updated in September 1994. The report outlines the enrolments, programs and services for Aboriginal students in post-secondary institutions. It also provides information about special programs and services offered on reserves by the public post-secondary institutions.

Some of the highlights from the report are described as follows:

- the full and part-time enrolments of Aboriginal students at the 20 institutions surveyed increased from 4,308 in 1987/88 to 12,218 in 1992/93.
- the number of institutions indicating that they provided special student support services for students of Aboriginal ancestry increased from nine in 1989/90 to 12 in 1992/93.
- the full and part-time enrolments in credit programs offered on reserve increased from 1,009 in 1987/88 to 1,335 in 1992/93.
- the number of institutions offering special support services to students on reserves increased from nine in 1989/90 to ten in 1992/93.

**New Program Initiatives of Interest to Aboriginal Students**

Although individuals of Aboriginal ancestry are eligible for admission to any post-secondary program on the same basis as any other Albertan, a number of new programs have been approved over the past several years that will be of special interest to the Aboriginal community and students.

**Advanced Education and Career Development (cont.)**

These programs include degree completion opportunities at Grande Prairie Regional College and Red Deer College, new diploma programs at Olds College and new environmental programs at Lethbridge Community College. Some specific programs are:

**Alberta College of Art and Design with Alberta Vocational College - Calgary** offers the **Artstream Program** aimed at students who demonstrate the potential to succeed in the visual arts.

**Alberta Vocational College - Lac La Biche** offered **Metis Entrepreneurship Training** in the basic skills for self-employment opportunities.

**Grande Prairie Regional College with Alberta Vocational College - Lesser Slave Lake and Yellowhead and Pembina Educational Consortia** offers a **Business Work Experience Program** consisting of four months of core business courses in computing, general business and entrepreneurship followed by two months of work experience. This entry-level program will provide practical business experience for people working in small businesses and local and Aboriginal government offices.

**Grant MacEwan Community College** is offering a new **Mental Health Care Diploma** program in partnership with the **Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council**. The program will be offered initially in Northern Alberta and expanded later to other locations in Alberta.

**Keyano College** offers a nine-month preparatory program for employment or further education called **Access to Careers and Employment Program.** The program will be offered to residents in the communities of Fort McKay, Conklin, Janvier and Gregoire/Anzac with a significant Aboriginal population.

**Keyano College** has a new ten-month employment-linked program for adults who function at a grade seven level or less titled **Literacy for Employment Training**. This has been a program of interest to students of Aboriginal ancestry.

**Keyano College** is offering a new two-year diploma program with a culturally-relevant curriculum for the training of qualified child and family service workers titled **Native Child and Family Development Diploma.**

**Keyano College** had designed a **Native Addictions Worker Diploma** program for graduates of the Native Addictions Certificate program. This program is developed in collaboration with the **Nechi Institute of Alcohol and Drug Education.**

**Keyano College** offers a four-month full-time program to prepare adults for re-entry into formal schooling. The program **Preparation for Academic and Career Education** is offered in the Fort McMurray and Fort Chipewyan areas and has been a program of interest to students of Aboriginal ancestry.

**Southern Alberta Institute of Technology** in collaboration with **Maskwachees Cultural College** will offer a new program in petroleum and energy technology primarily for students of Aboriginal ancestry.

**The University of Lethbridge** will expand its outreach offerings and workshops by delivering specialized second, third and fourth year credit courses to Aboriginal students in remote areas through its **Center for Aboriginal Management Education and Training.**

**Employment Counselling and Placement Services**

The Learner Assistance Division of Advanced Education and Career Development offers a number of employment and training programs and related services that are available to Albertans including people of Aboriginal decent. These include, employment preparation programs that focus on providing the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes in order for individuals to obtain and retain employment.

The Learner Assistance Division contracts with various community service providers for the delivery of specific employment preparation, counselling and placement services for individuals of Aboriginal ancestry. These contracts are offered in a number of areas throughout the province including Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Hinton, Grande Prairie and Grand Centre. These contracts provide career counselling, practical job related training, life management skills, job specific skill training, academic upgrading, on the job training and work experience, as well as job search and placement services.

The **Summer Temporary Employment Program**, a work experience initiative that provides meaningful career related employment during the months of May, June, July and August, also funds two specific projects for Aboriginals. These are: the **Indian Management Assistance Program** (administered through the First Nations Resource Council) provides post-secondary students valuable work experience in assisting Indian Bands and Metis Settlements prepare for self-government. The second is the **RCMP Native Students Program** (administered through the Metis Nation of Alberta Association) provides opportunities for post-secondary Indian and Metis students to gain valuable work experience in law enforcement within the RCMP.

**Advanced Education and Career Development (cont.)**

Advanced Education and Career Development in partnership with local communities, the local oil industry, and Human Resources Development Canada is assisting in the delivery of an **Aboriginal Oil and Gas Operations Program** proposed by the Peace Arch Project. The initiative is providing training for 25 operators to help them become employed in the local oil and gas industry. Students are being provided with a combination of paid on-site work experience with oil companies, and classroom instruction.

Advanced Education and Career Development also consults with various Aboriginal groups from time to time on issues of mutual interest such as education, training, career counselling and employment. These consultations are done in both formal and informal processes.

**Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund**

The Learner Assistance Division of Advanced Education and Career Development administers the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund. There are several awards that are of specific interest to students of Aboriginal ancestry.

**Northern Alberta Development Council Bursaries** (administered by the Alberta Heritage Fund) are available to students in full-time post-secondary study whose academic pursuits will prepare them for an occupation that has high employment potential in northern Alberta. Recipients sign an agreement to live and work for one year in northern Alberta for each year of bursary support provided. The Selection Committee for the bursary gives special consideration to Aboriginal students who are pursuing full-time studies and wish to return to their community to work after graduation. The maximum award is $3,000 per academic year.

Approximately 20 **Aboriginal Health Careers Bursaries** (administered by the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund) are available for Aboriginal students in Alberta to pursue post-secondary education in a health field. Applicants must be Indian, Inuit or Metis and residents of Alberta for a minimum of three years prior to applying. Awards are valued at up to $12,000 per year for college programs and $13,000 per year for university.

One award is available through the **Theodore R. Campbell Scholarship** (administered by the Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund) to recognize the academic excellence of an Aboriginal student in an education program at Blue Quills First Nation College. The scholarship is valued at $1,500 and students must be enrolled full-time in the second year of the Blue Quills university transfer program.

**Defining Work: An Aboriginal Perspective**
This is an attractive book which provides general job descriptions and educational requirements on 300 different kinds of work. Each section captures quotes on what their work means to Aboriginal people working in some of these fields.

Also, a range of materials covering issues like career planning, work search and coping with job loss are used by agencies and practitioners throughout Alberta free of charge. These publications and videos are intended to help any adult Albertan make informed choices and manage their transitions.

## Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

**Weed Pest Control and Soil Conservation**
Financial support administered by local Agricultural Service Boards for weed and pest control and soil conservation efforts is provided through agreements with the Cardston Agricultural Service Board and the Blood Reserve; and the M.D. of Rockyview (Calgary) Agricultural Service Board and the Morley Reserve. These arrangements have been going on for several years.

A new initiative with the Siksika Nation (Blackfoot Reserve) was recently introduced. This agreement provided a grant of $30,000 that went directly to the reserve for the purposes of agriculture activities that are normally covered in Agricultural Service Board agreements.

**Agricultural Service Boards**
Under the Metis Settlements Framework Agreement, in 1993/94, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development entered into an agreement with the Fishing Lake Settlement for Agricultural Service Board funding. Some activities and funds were provided on the basis of work done and claims made.

**Blood Tribe Irrigation Project**
This is a cost-sharing project involving the Government of Canada, the Province of Alberta and the Blood Tribe. The agreement involves the development of a 25,000 acre irrigation project.

## Community Development

The Provincial Museum of Alberta has continued its collaboration with a Native Advisory Committee on the planning and development of a 10,000 square foot Gallery of Aboriginal Peoples. This is a major undertaking expressly designed to foster a better public understanding of Aboriginal history and contemporary society. In November of 1995, Syncrude Canada announced that it would provide extensive corporate sponsorship for the Gallery, slated to open in the fall of 1997.

**Community Development (cont.)**

In connection with gallery development, the Provincial Museum is pleased to be working with Aboriginal Affairs on two projects: transcription of the Wabasca-Desmarais Tapes (audio recordings of Elders in the Wabasca-Desmarais area, conducted in 1968); and recordings of Elders in communities throughout Alberta.

The Museum continues to operate its Ethnology program, which not only curates important Aboriginal artifacts, but provides direct service through advice and information to Aboriginal communities.

The Museum has supported two Native intern experience opportunities in collections and curatorial activities in the past year.

Museum staff continue to play an active role in working with Aboriginal communities as part of the Province's historical resource management process. This involves working closely with the Blood First Nation, for instance, in meeting their concerns about impacts to historical resources created by the Pine Coulee Reservoir project.

The Archaeological Survey, Provincial Museum of Alberta routinely contacts Treaty organizations and nearby Aboriginal communities when there are chance discoveries of precontact and historic period Aboriginal burials in order to determine a suitable course of action for all concerned.

The Historic Sites Service is involved in the provision of planning and advisory services for projects including Blackfoot Crossing (Siksika); Ermineskin Interpretive Sign Project; Keep Our Circle Strong (Peigan); Saamis Site (Medicine Hat, Blood, Cree and Metis); Steinhauer Mission Whitefish Lake First Nation (Goodfish); the Frog Lake and other 1885 Rebellion sites (Frog Lake Band); Fishing Lake Settlement; Kalyna Country Ecomuseum (which has some Aboriginal themes) and the commemoration of Treaty 8 (Sucker Creek First Nation).

The Historic Sites Service is also involved in the operation of sites that interpret Aboriginal themes, and that have and continue to have input from Aboriginal communities, including Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump (Peigan, Blood), Fort George/Buckingham House, Father Lacombe Chapel, Victoria Settlement and Dunvegan. Head-Smashed-In is staffed largely by Peigan and Blood band members. These facilities also host intern programs for Aboriginal people.

The Provincial Archives of Alberta does not provide services specifically for Aboriginal people, but Aboriginal clients make significant use of Vital Statistics records in establishing Indian or Metis status.

## Economic Development and Tourism

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism provides funding to the Metis Nation of Alberta Association (MNAA) to increase development in rural and more isolated areas in the Province. The funding is used in the development and training of service boards and local community development committees within each of the six zones of the MNAA. These committees identify employment opportunities within the zones; provide assistance with economic development proposals; provide support to local Metis entrepreneurs; and coordinate workshops related to business development and employment opportunities in specific industries.

## Education

**Native Education Project**

In 1984, the Native Education Project was established to develop a provincial Native Education Policy Statement and develop curricular and learning resources that would reflect positively on the Aboriginal people of the province. The policy statement indicates that Alberta Education supports the development and delivery of programs and services that will:

- provide enhanced and equal opportunities for Aboriginal students to acquire the quality of education traditional in Alberta;
- challenge Aboriginal students to learn and perform to the best of their ability;
- provide opportunities for Aboriginal students to study and experience their own and other Aboriginal cultures and lifestyles;
- provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to help guide and shape the education of their children; and
- provide opportunities for all students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, in Alberta's schools to recognize and appreciate the various Aboriginal cultures and their many contributions to the Province and society.

In order to achieve these goals, the Native Education Project has, in the past, supplied specific grants to school divisions for the hiring of Aboriginal liaison workers, language instructors and counsellors.

Funds have also been made available to a variety of provincial school divisions and through them, to various Native organizations, for the production of curriculum learning resources that can be used in every school in the Province. Partnerships have also been formed with private enterprise for the production, publication, and distribution of such materials to potential customers both within and outside of Alberta.

The Native Education Project has concentrated on three areas of curricular development. These include Social Studies/Language Arts, Native languages and cultural awareness type materials.

## Environmental Protection

**Aboriginal Issues Working Group**

Under the Forest Conservation Strategy, an Aboriginal Issues Working Group was established. This working group undertook a consultation process with Aboriginal people and identified issues which need to be considered in the preparation of the Province's Forest Conservation Strategy.

**Community and Intergovernmental Relations**

A priority has been placed in improving community level service in the restructuring of the Department. This includes the formation of the Community and Intergovernmental Relations Branch which will work with the line services of the Department as well as other Departments and agencies to better address issues and achieve more effective relations and partnerships with Aboriginal people.

**Water Management Policy and Legislation Review**

There is a commitment to public consultation to ensure that the input of all stakeholders is obtained in the development of water management policies and legislation. Input and participation of First Nations people through the appointment of a First Nation representative on the Water Management Review Committee was undertaken. Direct consultation with a First Nation is available by letter of request.

**Cooperative Management**

A concept of "cooperative management" has been adopted with First Nations to address natural resource matters of mutual interest. This is a process of consultation and cooperation that does not override the Province's jurisdiction over natural resources. Implementation of Memorandums of Understanding signed with Whitefish Lake First Nation and Little Red River/Tallcree First Nations are underway.

**Kee Tas Kee Now Community Working Group**

The three First Nation communities of the Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council (Whitefish Lake, Loon River and Woodland Cree) and representatives from industry formed a community working group to discuss forestry issues and solutions for the Forest Conservation Strategy.

## Family and Social Services

**Arrangement for the Funding and Administration of Social Services**

This agreement, between the Government of Alberta and Canada, establishes responsibility for funding and delivery of Social Services to persons on reserves in the Treaty 7 and 8 areas. In practice, the Government of Canada applies the same funding process in the Treaty 6 area. Through this agreement, the Government of Canada is responsible for funding services provided to all persons, including non-Indians, ordinarily resident

on-reserve. The Government of Alberta funds and delivers services to Status Indians ordinarily resident off-reserve throughout Alberta.

**Memorandum of Understanding between Alberta Family and Social Services and the Metis Nation of Alberta Association**

This is a subsidiary agreement to the Alberta/MNAA Framework Agreement. Under this Memorandum of Understanding, a Social Services Sub-Committee comprising representatives from the Metis Nation of Alberta Association, the Metis Nation Framework Action Centre, Metis Child and Family Services, Alberta Family and Social Services and Alberta Aboriginal Affairs meet regularly to address social service issues of concern to Metis people. It is intended to be a partnership relationship promoting the participation of the Metis in planning and delivering social services to Metis children and families.

**Children's Services**

Seven agreements covering 22 First Nations are in place with First Nations agencies delivering Child Welfare services on-reserve. Child Welfare services are provided by the First Nations pursuant to the Child Welfare Act. Agreements are in place with Siksika, Stoney, Tsuu T'ina, Bigstone and Saddle Lake First Nations; and Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council and Yellowhead Tribal Services.

Family Ties is a province-wide initiative. Regional designates have been identified to work with Aboriginal communities and case managers to ensure that children are connected to their community and/or family where it is likely that the child will benefit from such connection.

An Associate Director of Child Welfare reviews Aboriginal Child Welfare cases to ensure that Aboriginal interests and cultures are respected while complying with the Child Welfare program.

Aboriginal Community Facilitators are a part of the process of the Commissioner of Services for Children initiative. They liaise with Aboriginal people and agencies in the development of off-reserve service plans for local authorities.

**Human Resources and Organizational Planning**

A cultural awareness program is being developed for all department staff. Bursary funding is available for Metis and non-status Aboriginal social work students.

## Family and Social Services (cont.)

**Adult Services**
Agreements have been signed with a number of Aboriginal organizations for delegated delivery of Family and Social Services income support programs to specified groups or within specified geographical areas.

**Internal Department Initiatives**
In 1995, Aboriginal Relations was transferred to Aboriginal Affairs where it continues to provide support and advisory services to the department.

Personnel has implemented a "trainee" program to encourage employment of Aboriginal staff in service delivery.

Aboriginal information is coordinated through designates of program and delivery and a "key communicator" for the department.

**Commissioner of Children's Services**
In 1993, the Minister of Family and Social Services appointed a Commissioner of Services for Children to consult with communities about ways to improve services for children. In November 1994, the Minister announced that he would act on key recommendations made as a result of the community consultations and would restructure the current system based on four major principles. These are community-based service; early intervention; improved service to Aboriginal people; and integration of services.

In the Commissioner's report entitled "Focus on Children", there were four recommendations made to government to improve service to Aboriginal people:

- The responsibility for planning and delivering services for Aboriginal children and families be transferred to Aboriginal communities.
- The request of Aboriginal people to be fully involved in any changes that are made to existing programs must also be honoured.
- Joint ventures among Aboriginal organizations and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations should be encouraged.
- It is necessary to ensure that effective and culturally-sensitive services are developed and are available to meet the needs of Aboriginal children.

These recommendations will be addressed through the participation and involvement of Aboriginal people in every aspect of the redesign of Children's Services. To date, each of the 17 Regional Steering Committees has two co-chairs, one of whom is Aboriginal. The composition of the Regional Steering Committees includes Aboriginal people in proportion to the number of children in the Child Welfare and Young Offender systems.

An Early Intervention Program has allotted $25 million of the designated $50 million for programs for Aboriginal children because up to 50% of children in care are Aboriginal. Throughout the Province, increasing numbers of Aboriginal people are joining working groups, forming their own working groups or seeking participation on Regional Steering Committees as the Aboriginal community becomes aware of the scope of this initiative.

## Health

**Aboriginal Health Liaison Project/"Aboriginal Health Strategy"**

In 1992, Alberta Health initiated its Aboriginal Health Liaison Project to actively seek out the views of Aboriginal people in Alberta about their health and the health of their communities. There were over 130 meetings with First Nations, Metis Settlements, and Native Friendship Centres, among others. Based on these discussions, Alberta Health produced "Strengthening the Circle", which reports on what Aboriginal people said about their health and which includes an "Aboriginal Health Strategy For Alberta Health". The document was released to Aboriginal communities by the Minister of Health on June 27, 1995. Aboriginal Albertans are asked to continue the dialogue with Alberta Health regarding whether we have fully understood their views and if the proposed strategy is a useful first step. Alberta Health will work with communities, through the Regional Health Authorities and Provincial Health Boards, to address the issues which Aboriginal people and communities wish to pursue.

Additionally, under the Aboriginal Health Strategy, Alberta Health has announced an Aboriginal Health Strategy Project Fund and an Aboriginal Health Careers Bursary Program. The Project Fund will encourage proposals for local health initiatives from partnerships involving Aboriginal communities and associations with Regional Health Authorities and Provincial Health Boards. The Aboriginal Health Careers Bursary Program will additionally encourage Aboriginal Albertans to pursue adult and post-secondary education in health careers.

**Gift Lake Metis Settlement - New Primary Health Care Services**

In consultation with the Gift Lake Metis Settlement, improved health services were designed for the community. A community health committee works closely with the Regional Health Authority regarding the delivery of community-based health services.

**Northern Lake Communities - Community-Based, Primary Health Care Services**

Following extensive consultations with Alberta Health and local health authorities, community health councils in each of the four communities of Loon Lake, Red Earth, Peerless Lake and Trout Lake developed

**Health (cont.)**

community-based, primary health care service plans, using nurse practitioners and community health workers based in each community. New facilities and nurses' residences have been provided to the communities. These services were initiated in October 1995.

**Cross Cultural Community Health Services Grants**
In 1994, cross cultural community health services grants were provided to four health units to improve linkages between health providers and Aboriginal communities in order to develop appropriate and culturally-sensitive approaches to health programming. In 1995, a Native Health Liaison Worker program was supported in the Northern Lights Regional Health Authority. A Metis needs assessment was supported in Medicine Hat. In the future these cross-cultural and other related grants to improve the delivery of health services to Aboriginal people will be provided through the Aboriginal Health Strategy Project Fund.

**From Victim to Survivor to Warrior**
This is a culturally focused treatment program offered by the Sucker Creek Women's Emergency Shelter located on the Sucker Creek Reserve in the North West Mental Health Services region. This program offers treatment and support to women and their children who are victims of family violence. As well, a strong educative outreach program has been established.

**Mental Health Suicide Prevention Programs**
The Provincial Mental Health Board is continuing joint funding of suicide prevention programs with First Nations. One example is the support program at Hobbema, for people in crisis, who have been affected by suicide.

The *Deana Don't Do It Show* is an audio-tape directed at suicide prevention among teen and pre-teen Aboriginal youth. It was developed through a partnership between the Peekiskwetan "Let's Talk Society" of Wabasca and Desmarais and the Provincial Mental Health Board. The developers - volunteer youth performers - scripted a radio phone-in show to help reach their target audience. On the other side of the tape, a youth performer interviews a Cree elder, basing the questions on the points raised in the radio play. The interview is recorded in the Woodland Cree dialect.

**HIV/AIDS Aboriginal Programming**
In 1995/96, Alberta Health provided $30,000 in AIDS grants to Aboriginal organizations/agencies wanting to partake in HIV/AIDS specific programming.

**Tuberculosis Information Booklet**
Tuberculosis Services Branch, Alberta Health, in partnership with Hobbema

Indian Health Services, have redesigned a Tuberculosis information booklet which uses images of Aboriginal people and incorporates language relevant to Aboriginal culture.

**Health Services Research and Innovation Fund Grant**
In 1994/95, the Health Services Research and Innovation Fund provided a $78,000 grant to Calgary Health Services for a two-year research project. The project is now beginning its second year. The project examines the effectiveness of Community Health Representatives in an urban setting to improve the availability of, access to and satisfaction with health services for urban Aboriginal people.

**New Horizons - New Concepts In Continuing Care Project in High Prairie**
The Keeweetinok Lakes Regional Health Authority proposes to designate a unit in the J.B. Wood Continuing Care Centre in High Prairie in celebration of the cultural uniqueness of Aboriginal peoples. The program for that unit will include Aboriginal medicine, traditional meals, a Cree interpreter, decor based on Aboriginal heritage and culturally-based recreational activities.

**Culturally Appropriate Activities By Regional Health Authorities**
A number of Regional Health Authorities have First Nation and Metis members. Some Regional Health Authorities have developed Aboriginal Advisory Councils to provide policy advice to the authorities and to support services for Aboriginal people in the region's facilities and programs. One of the most active is the Aboriginal Advisory Committee of the Capital Health Region.

The Capital Regional Health Authority has initiated a visitation program for Aboriginal hospital patients whereby cultural helpers visit patients and act as go-betweens/interpreters between the patients and hospitals. Two elders in residence (one male, one female) are also available for consultations and cultural assistance at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. Additionally, the Chapel at the Royal Alexandra Hospital has been given a multi-face design to reflect Aboriginal spirituality.

The Capital Health Region has also developed a special northern dietary program for Aboriginal people visiting from the Northwest Territories at the Royal Alexandra Hospital. This program may soon be extended to the University of Alberta Hospital. The Royal Alexandra hospital also has facilities in place which offer various cultural activities such as wakes and pipe and sweat-lodge ceremonies. The Capital Health Region has made adjustments at both the Royal Alexandra and University Hospitals to accommodate sweet-grass ceremonies throughout their facilities.

**Health (cont.)**

Cultural Awareness Workshops, conducted by elders, have gone on at the Royal Alexandra hospital and are now going on at the University Hospital. These have been designed to sensitize staff to concepts in Aboriginal health and healing, and will be made available to health staff throughout the region.

Finally, the Capital Health Region has also initiated an Aboriginal Diabetic Wellness Program, which will commence in the spring of 1996. The Program has two components: a local one composed of a four-day teaching program operating through the Royal Alexandra Hospital which integrates traditional and Western medicine methods; and an outreach component which brings assistance to outlying communities and tailors the program to their needs.

The Northern Lights Regional Health Authority has developed a special "sweetgrass" room in recognition and response to the spiritual needs of Aboriginal residents.

The Headwaters Regional Health Authority has initiated cultural sensitivity programs in the Canmore and Oilfields hospitals. An Aboriginal diet is being provided at the Oilfields hospital.

**Implementation Plan for Removing Barriers Report**

In 1994, Alberta Health developed an implementation plan to respond to the health issues raised in *Removing Barriers: An Action Plan for Aboriginal People with Disabilities*, from the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. This plan includes working with the Metis Settlements, the Metis Settlements Transition Commission and appropriate Regional Health Authorities to ensure that the Metis Settlements are fully aware of the availability of services through the Alberta Aids to Daily Living and Home Care programs.

**Brighter Futures Initiatives**

Alberta Health and Alberta Family and Social Services have collaborated with Health Canada on the federal Brighter Futures program, to identify, prioritize and support initiatives under the Community Action Program for Children. A number of projects have been approved which incorporate education and intervention activities as well as the promotion of better health and social development for children and their families. Initiatives involve the Native Women's Transition Home Society, Lethbridge; the Calling Lake Child Development Society; the Peekiskwetan Society, Wabasca; the Ben Calf Robe Society, Edmonton; Metis Calgary Family Services Society; and the Children's Centre Society, Fort McMurray.

**Native Justice Initiatives Unit**

In June 1993, the Office of the Coordinator, Aboriginal Justice Initiatives was established. The Director of the Office, in addition to advising Departmental executive managers on all Aboriginal issues and programs, is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and Its Impact on the Indian and Metis People of Alberta (Cawsey Report). Working with the Departmental Steering Committee, chaired by the Deputy Minister, the Director liaises with key stakeholders within the criminal justice system and the Aboriginal community to encourage and facilitate the development of Aboriginal justice initiatives to meet the needs of the Aboriginal community and to address the requirements of the task force report.

**Protocol Agreement Between the Alberta Department of Justice and the Metis Nation of Alberta Association**

On August 6, 1996, the Minister of Justice signed the Protocol Agreement between the Alberta Department of Justice and the Metis Nation of Alberta Association (MNAA). The agreement was signed by the President and Zone Vice-Presidents at the MNAA's 68th Annual Assembly.

The Protocol Agreement commits the parties to develop a process for consultation and discussion, involving both elected and appointed officials, on Administration of Justice issues important to Metis people. It also commits the parties to: jointly work towards the development and implementation of Metis designed and delivered justice programs and services; establish a process of mutual cooperation and consultation on identified issues and work in partnership towards common goals, a common understanding and a strengthening of communication and cooperation between the parties.

**COURT SERVICES**

**Court of Queen's Bench Sittings in High Level**

The Court of Queen's Bench commenced sitting in High Level, Alberta in October 1992. Approximately five weeks of Court sittings are scheduled yearly. These sittings substantially reduce travel distances for the area's large Aboriginal population who utilize the services of the Court.

**Jury Duty: Initiatives for Increased Aboriginal Participation**

The Department of Justice has taken steps to ensure that Aboriginal people are adequately represented in jury arrays and are summonsed regularly for jury duty throughout Alberta. Improvements have been implemented to expand the Department's resource base to ensure Aboriginal people are included in this process.

**Justice (cont.)**

**Cross Cultural Training**
Ongoing cultural awareness training and educational programs are regularly held for both the judiciary and court administrators through the resources of the Department of Justice Staff College.

**Aboriginal Justice of the Peace**
The Chief Judge of the Provincial Court of Alberta has the authority to supervise Aboriginal Justices of the Peace as recommended by the Cawsey Commission in the publication "Justice on Trial - Report of the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and Its Impact on the Indian and Metis People of Alberta". Supervision by the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court enhances the judicial independence of these positions.

There have been requests by Aboriginal people for more involvement in the justice system. At the time "Justice on Trial" was drafted there were only four Aboriginal Justices of the Peace appointed to the Province. There are currently ten active Aboriginal Justice of the Peace appointments in the Province.

**Aboriginal Provincial Court Judges**
Since the completion of "Justice on Trial", two Aboriginal Provincial Court Judges (the Honourable Judge T.R. Goodson and the Honourable Judge R.S. Fowler) have been appointed. These appointments increase the awareness of Aboriginal culture in the areas in which they preside.

**CORRECTIONS PROGRAMS**

**Assistant Probation Officer Program**
This program, operating since 1979, involves contracting private individuals to provide probation supervision and specialized Community Correction services, mostly to remote communities.

**Community Supervision Program**
Funding is provided to Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA) to supervise offenders under conditions of either probation or temporary absence.

**Elders Visitation Program**
Operating in Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton, Elders are contracted to provide spiritual guidance and counselling to adult and young offender inmates.

**Kainai Community Corrections Society**
This Society, funded wholly by Alberta Justice, is an independent non-profit society which provides community corrections services and operates a

24-bed minimum security correctional facility on the Blood Reserve for the Blood Tribe.

**Metis Nation Wilderness Camp Society**
Established in March 1993, this Society operates a 25-bed minimum security camp near Lac La Biche. Funded by the Departments of Justice, Environmental Protection, and Public Works, Supply and Services, select Metis offenders are engaged in the construction of Lakeland Provincial Park.

**Metis Zone II Elders' Visitation Program**
Through an agreement with the Metis Nation of Alberta, Zone II Regional Council, Alberta Justice provides funding for Elders from four Metis communities to counsel and provide spiritual guidance to adult and young offenders under community supervision.

**Native Addiction Treatment Programs**
Jointly funded by Alberta Justice and the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, Community Residential Centres provide specialized treatment from substance abuse for Aboriginal offenders within the context of Native culture and traditions. These Centres are Poundmakers Lodge and Sunrise Residence.

**Native Counselling Services of Alberta**
This private organization is provided funding through Alberta Justice to deliver various corrections services to the Province's Aboriginal community. Programs are delivered within the context of Aboriginal culture and traditions. Native Counselling Services of Alberta operates the 20-bed Westcastle minimum security camp and two open custody young offender group homes. Extensive family and criminal courtworker services are delivered through field offices across Alberta.

**Native Courtworker Program**
This program is jointly funded by Alberta Justice and the Federal Department of Justice. The program is operated by Native Counselling Services of Alberta. Under this program, paralegal assistance is provided to Aboriginal offenders appearing before the courts. Defendants are instructed on court procedures, legal rights, translation services and counselling.

**Community Corrections Services**
Alberta Justice funds societies to provide community corrections services (probation, courtworker and crime prevention) to First Nations across Alberta. The Yellowhead Tribal Community Corrections Society provides service to the Enoch, Alexander, Alexis, Sunchild and O'Chiese Bands.

**Justice (cont.)**

The Tsuu T'ina Nation/Stoney Corrections Society provides community corrections services to the Tsuu T'ina, Stoney, Bearspaw and Chiniki First Nations in south-west Alberta. The Siksika Justice Commission provides services to the residents of the Siksika First Nation and the Kainai Society provides services to the Blood Reserve.

**Young Offender Native Custody Homes**

Private residences are contracted to provide residential accommodation in a family environment to young offenders serving open custody dispositions in their home communities.

**Youth Justice Committees**

Fifteen Aboriginal communities have established youth justice committees pursuant to Section 69 of the Young Offenders Act (Canada). These communities provide a sentence advisory role to the youth court and assist in the administration of the alternative measures program. The communities assume a holistic approach in addressing youth crime in their communities.

**PUBLIC SECURITY PROGRAMS**

**Policing Services**

Through tripartite agreements among Alberta Justice, the Solicitor General of Canada and the First Nation(s), policing services have been established with the Blood Tribe, Louis Bull Tribe, Siksika Nation, Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council (representing 8 First Nations) and Hobbema 2N Corporation (Hobbema Police Service). Policing services are also being developed with North Peace Tribal Council (representing the Tallcree First Nation and Little Red River Cree Nation), Tsuu T'ina, Stoney and Alexis First Nations. Planning is ongoing with other First Nations to develop policing alternatives or enhance existing policing arrangements with the RCMP.

**RCMP On-Reserve Detachments and Satellite Offices**

RCMP on-reserve Aboriginal policing detachments are located at Assumption, Desmarais and Hobbema (Samson Reserve). Satellite offices have been established at the Alexander, Enoch, Calling Lake, Fox Lake, Janvier, Peigan, Saddle Lake, Stoney, Sunchild and O'Chiese Reserves.

**Crime Prevention Coordinators**

Alberta Justice funds crime prevention coordinators for the Kainai Community Corrections Society, Yellowhead Community Corrections Society, Siksika Nation, Tallcree First Nation, and the Tsuu T'ina Nation/Stoney Community Corrections Society. These coordinators work in the community to develop programs that increase awareness of factors that may lead to crime and programs that promote community wellness.

## Municipal Affairs

During 1992, a province-wide consultation was initiated jointly by Alberta Municipal Affairs and the Metis Nation of Alberta Association to discuss rural housing programs and the proposed development of a revised program that would target need in the more remote areas of the province.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in August 1992 at the Metis Nation of Alberta Association (MNAA) Annual Assembly involving Alberta Municipal Affairs, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the MNAA, that would see the parties continue discussions towards delivery and administration of social housing programs, through community-based initiatives.

In May 1993, the Minister responsible for Alberta Municipal Affairs approved the creation of the Wabasca Housing Authority to oversee the housing needs within that community. This included housing units under the Senior Citizen Lodge Program, Senior Citizen Self-Contained Program, Rural Emergency Home Program and the Rural and Native Housing Program.

In July 1993, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Province and the Metis Nation of Alberta Association was renewed for the Municipal Government and Housing Sub-Committee under the Framework Agreement.

In 1994, Alberta Municipal Affairs developed an implementation plan to respond to the issues raised in *Removing Barriers: An Action Plan for Aboriginal People with Disabilities.*

In January 1995, Alberta Municipal Affairs and Alberta Family and Social Services announced the Remote Housing Program. This program is a job skills training program that will construct modest houses in northern Alberta communities. These houses will be built for Albertans who are living in substandard or overcrowded conditions, and who cannot access conventional lending or other programs that provide affordable housing. The program will run for four years. The eligible communities identified for this program have, for the most part, a large Aboriginal population.

In 1996, program funding was granted to reintroduce additional portable housing units under the Rural Emergency Home Program. The program, while available to all Albertans, has in the past provided emergency accommodations in locations that have a predominate Aboriginal population.

## Northern Development Branch

**Northern Alberta Development Council**

Through the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) Bursary Program, approximately 125 bursaries of $3,000 are awarded each year

**Northern Development Branch (cont.)**

to students in post-secondary studies. In return for the bursary, students work in northern Alberta for a year following graduation. Presently, emphasis is placed on helping students who are in their final year of study, in programs with high employment potential in northern Alberta. Roughly 14% of bursary applications come from Aboriginal students and close to 16% of bursaries are awarded to Aboriginal students.

Through the Bursary Partnership Program, the NADC co-sponsors bursaries with community organizations and industry. Bursaries vary between $1,000 and $3,000, and have a return service commitment. Sponsors select students for the bursary. Over the past few years, close to 80 bursaries have been awarded. Roughly half of these were awarded to Aboriginal students.

**Northern Alberta Agreement**

The partners in this Agreement are Industry Canada and the Northern Development Branch. The Agreement's purpose was to assist in strengthening the northern economy. The program began in August 1992 and ended March 1995. A number of approved projects will be implemented in the 95/96 and 96/97 fiscal years. The Agreement approved 126 projects contributing over $6 million towards these initiatives. Over 30% of these approved projects were awarded for Aboriginal ventures including business, community economic initiatives and job related training programs.

**Transportation and Utilities**

**Upgrading of Highway 88 through the Tallcree Reserve**

A joint venture was entered into with PCL Contracting and the Tallcree membership for the upgrading of Highway 88 through the reserve. A successful training program resulted from the project.

**Upgrading of Secondary Highway 901 Through the Siksika Reserve**

Construction is now underway for the upgrading of Secondary Highway 901 through the Siksika Reserve. The facility will be paved from the western reserve boundary up to and connecting with Highway 1.

**Upgrading of North-South Local Road Through the Saddle Lake Reserve**

A joint venture project has just been completed for the upgrading of the local north-south road through the Saddle Lake Reserve. The Saddle Lake Band road construction company performed all the necessary work.

**Treasury**

**Alberta Indian Tax Exemption (AITE) Program**

The AITE program enables Indians to buy fuel and tobacco exempt from Alberta taxes when the purchase is made on an Indian reserve.